

Scenario 2: Slow-building River Flood

SITUATION:

Spring thaws have brought the river to near flood levels. Additionally, ice flows are beginning to choke narrow bends in the river and create ice and debris dams at bridge abutments. The ground remains frozen, causing peak water runoff. The National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts up to 3 days of spring rains.

The first day of incessant rain guarantees some flooding in low-lying agricultural and recreation areas. The NWS issues a flood forecast and the River Forecast Center has issued flood and flash flood watches. All emergency services personnel go on standby alert and the EOC maintains a 24-hour communications watch.

By the end of the second day, upstream communities are experiencing severe flooding and the river has not yet crested. Severe flooding is expected to affect this community during the night of the second day. Mutual-aid agreements are reaffirmed with neighboring communities that are out of the floodplain.

By 6:00 p.m., the public is advised of imminent severe flooding. Probable flood zones are broadcast by radio and television. Citizens in these areas are advised about procedures for preparing for flooding. The EOC activates a highway traffic control plan to expedite evacuation of flooded areas.

An upstream community reports that a major ice dam has broken through an old bridge. It will cause rapid increases in flooding downstream. By 10:30 p.m., emergency personnel who are helping evacuate citizens report that floodwater has already encroached on a major evacuation route. The flood is more than 3 hours ahead of schedule.

The rains continue and by 12:00 midnight, it becomes obvious that the flood will not crest for at least another 18 hours. Further, due to the break in the ice dam, citizens were unable to complete adequate preparations. LP gas tanks from a bulk storage business have floated off their standards and are bobbing through the floodwaters into the commercial area of town.

EOC officials anticipate floodwaters so high that one hospital and one temporary shelter must now be evacuated. Some of the hospital patients must be transported to a facility in a neighboring community. Municipal power supplies must be turned off in 33 percent of the community. The community's water supply is contaminated and residents well outside the floodplain are required to use emergency water supplies.

ASSUMED CONDITIONS:

[NOTE: This activity is designed without a specified size of the impacted community.]

The activity assumes decision-making at an EOC or similar facility, in addition to those decisions made on the scene. The following events have been identified as critical to this scenario:

- Local interpretation of NWS forecast information
- Coordination with waste utility
- Communication and coordination with the National Guard
- Evacuation decision-making
- Public information
- Flood crest forecasting for the vicinity
- Evacuation route monitoring
- Search and rescue resource deployment
- Coordination with utility companies
- Identification of victims, survivors, and/or relocatees
- Debris clearance resource allocation
- Outside assistance decisions and request procedures